Remarks

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application.

Allowable subject matter

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. Claims 9, 10 and 20 have been rewritten in independent form and are consequently allowable. Withdrawal of the objection thereto is respectfully requested.

Claim rejections

Claims 1-8 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lichtenberg et al. (US 2002/0165701) (hereafter, "Lichtenberg") in view of Wongvasu et al., "Trie Representation for Expressing the Compatibility Between Items in a Logical Bill of Material Structure" (hereafter, "Wongvasu"). The Applicant respectfully traverses. The cited references do not support the rejection for at least the reason that they do not disclose or suggest "performing logical operations on the bit strings to determine whether the selection conditions permit at least one and at most one of a variant of a component to be included in the configurable product " as recited in independent claim 1. Similarly, the references do not disclose or suggest "applying the selection conditions to the bit matrix, the selection conditions defining allowed combinations of values of the characteristics, to determine whether the selection conditions provide for selecting at most one and at least one of variants corresponding to a component" as recited in independent claim 4.

The Office Action cites paragraph [0011] of Lichtenberg as disclosing the noted feature. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. Paragraph [0011] merely discusses "us[ing] bit-vectors to represent all possible consistent configurations" The possible configurations are "tested against the rules and the configurations that turn out to be consistent are enumerated in a list, typically using a hash-table of bit-vectors." However, independent claim 1 does not relate to determining

"consistent configurations," but to whether *selection conditions* to be applied to component variants are valid. As described in the specification, the selection conditions must be "consistent and complete," meaning that the selection conditions permit at least one and at most one of a component variant to be selected for inclusion in a product. The latter language is also reflected in claims 1 and 4.

It is clear that a "consistent configuration" in Lichtenberg, by contrast, refers to the totality of components in a final product. See paragraph [0007], e.g.: "The number of possible configurations of the product grows rapidly with the number of components the product is composed of." The configurations of Lichtenberg, thus, are in no way the equivalent of the selection conditions recited in present claims 1 and 4.

Wongvasu does not remedy the deficiencies in Lichtenberg. For example, Wongvasu is similarly silent as to any evaluation of selection conditions as recited in claims 1 and 4.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 4 are allowable over Lichtenberg and Wongvasu. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 11-14 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lichtenberg in view of Wongvasu. The Applicant respectfully traverses. The cited references do not support the rejection for at least the reason that they do not disclose or suggest "performing logical operations on the bit strings to determine whether the selection conditions permit at least one and at most one of a variant of a component to be included in the configurable product" as recited in independent claim 11. This has already been discussed above. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 16-19 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lichtenberg in view of Wongvasu. The Applicant respectfully traverses. As to claim 16, the cited references do not support the rejection for at least the reason that they do not disclose or suggest "performing logical operations on the

bit strings to determine whether the selection conditions permit at least one and at most one of a variant of a component to be included in the configurable product," which was discussed earlier.

As to independent claim 19, the rejection is not sustainable for at least the reason that the references do not disclose or suggest "applying the selection conditions to the bit matrix, the selection conditions defining allowed combinations of values of the characteristics, to determine whether the selection conditions provide for selecting at most one and at least one of variants corresponding to a component" as recited. As discussed previously, neither Lichtenberg nor Wongvasu contains any teaching or suggestion regarding selection conditions.

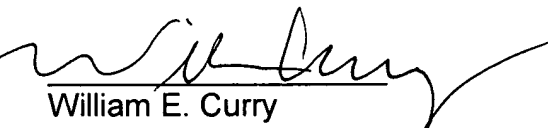Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In light of the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4323 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: PEC. 29, 2006   By:

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